Teacher Work Sample

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Ninth Grade English

*Romeo and Juliet* Unit

MidAmerica Nazarene University

Curriculum Development and Assessment

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Teacher Work Sample

**Section 1: Contextual Analysis**

**Knowledge of Community, School, and Classroom Factors**

**Community and School District.** The community is a combination of rural and suburban settings which lies approximately 30 miles from a major midwestern city. According the US Census (2015), the population of the community where the high school is located is approximately 5,800, not accounting for the rural population outside the city limits (or the other suburban communities which lie within the school district boundaries). The racial makeup of the community is 94 percent White, with 4 percent Latino, and 2.5 percent two or more races, 1.6 percent African-American. Almost 95 percent of the whole community has achieved the educational level high school graduation or above. The home ownership rate is 77 percent. The median household income is $77,490, with only 4.5% below the national poverty rate (US Census Bureau, 2015). The graphics below reveal that more than 98 percent of residents live in single family homes and illustrate the average home size in the area (School Digger, 2015).

  

The school district is small.  They have only five traditional schools: three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.   However, the district also oversees an online high school program ([School District Website], *Our Schools*, 2015). The district draws students from two counties and parts of three distinctive municipalities (School Digger, 2015).

**School.** The school to which the teacher candidate was assigned is the only high school in the district. As such, it draws students from both the rural and suburban contexts. The school moved into its current building in fall 2007. It is a very nice facility with lots of windows and a bright, open atmosphere. Earlier this semester the school implemented a 1-to-1 technology initiative in the high school.  Now all the students have Macs to use at school and home ([School District Website], *1-to1,* 2015).

The school has limited racial diversity.  Last year's total enrollment at the high school was 639 students grades 9th through 12th.  Of those, 554 were White. The graphic below illustrates growth in overall enrollment and the racial make of the school since 1988. The current student to teacher ratio is one teacher for every 15.8 students. Approximately 26% of students are eligible for free or discounted lunch programs (School Digger, 2015).



**School Enrollment and Ethnicity**

**Classroom.** The classroom is made up of 16 high school freshman, composed of seven girls and nine boys. The class size is unusually small for the school where most classes run 20-23 students. The classroom has a few motivational posters, two large windows, but little other decoration. The whole front wall is a white board. Every day the teacher writes the class agenda on board for student reference. A teacher desk, podium, projector screen are at the front of the wall. The classroom desks are arranged in rows facing front. Students have assigned seats from the beginning of the semester. It is a first hour class which meets for 52 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and 45 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday. Every student in the classroom has a school issued Macbook Air which is capable of printing to a shared printer in the hallway. During independent work, students are often allowed to listen to music from their cellphones. Generally, the students remain within the allowed parameters; however, the teacher candidate has observed several instances where cellphones in the classroom have become a distraction. Because of the lighting in the classroom, the projector screen is difficult to see unless both sets of overhead lights are turned off.

**Knowledge of Characteristics of Students**

The students in this class are well-behaved, quiet, and generally hard working. The class tends to be subdued, partly because of the early hour. However, the teacher candidate feels assured that the students are actively listening and engaged in class content based on responses to questioning and formative assessments, even though they are not eager to speak and discuss material in class. A student interest survey revealed students have generally positive attitudes toward school, and are motived to work for success. All but one student expressed the desire to attend college after high school. All of the students in this class have siblings. The graphic below, based on student responses, illustrates birth order, average number of siblings, and average household size of the students in this class. The teacher candidate believes that birth order and home demographics provides valuable insight into student academic performance, responsibility, and personality.

**Knowledge of Students’ Varied Approaches to Learning**

On the whole, students valued learning through doing and learning through watching above learning by listening and learning through reading. When faced with an academic roadblock, most students said they would figure it out on their own, followed by ask a friend for help. All but three students indicated that they prefer group work.

**Knowledge of Students’ Skills and Prior Learning**

The students often use reading guides and whole class discussion to assess their comprehension of the literature. The preceding unit focused on presidential speeches and historical non-fiction, specifically persuasive appeals and loaded language. Prior to that students read a non-fiction work about the fast food industry. Students focused on developing arguments and supporting claims with factual evidence. In the previous semester, students studied poetry and read Homer’s *Odyssey.* Having read *The Odyssey,* students have some experience reading epic literature of elevated language. However, most of the class has little or no experience reading Shakespeare. Much of the information in the unit will be completely new to the students.

**Implications for Classroom Management, Instructional Planning, and Assessment**

 The technology available in the classroom brings advantages and disadvantages into the dynamic of classroom management. Students are interested in using their computers. So, by using technology during instruction (taking notes on the computer, for example) student motivation can be increased. However, without proper direction, the technology can become a distraction from the content at hand. The teacher candidate will seek to achieve a balance in this area. Also, because of the need for darkness in the room to see the screen, the teacher candidate will seek to limit the amount of class time spent viewing the screen. The darkness of the room increases opportunity for student disengagement.

Because of the early morning time period, and the quieter mix of personalities in this class, the teacher candidate must intentionally engage students and create an environment where students feel safe and motivated to share their ideas in writing and discussion. The teacher candidate must seek to make content relevant to the students through analogy and current examples.

The teacher candidate believes assessment through written work and objective quizzes will provide the most accurate picture of student learning, as opposed to discussion or oral participation. Many students may reach mastery of the content, but because of their personality and learning profiles do poorly on oral assessments.

**Two Identified Students for Differentiation***.* Student 3 moved to the school from another state this semester (and has attended 13 different schools since kindergarten).  This student is very quiet, never volunteering information or speaking out in a large group setting.  The teacher candidate will differentiate for this student by process by checking in with her progress individually and offering her encouragement and affective support.  The teacher candidate will also implement some partner activities so that this student is able to integrate with her classmates in a non-threatening ways.

Student 1 is one of the few students in the class who is eager to share-out ideas and to engage in dialogue.  The student is quick thinking, reflective, and highly motivated - seemingly intrinsically so.  The student prefers to work alone at his own pace, and generally finishes activities much more quickly than his classmates. The teacher candidate will differentiate for this student by product and process.  Student 1 could benefit from some adjustments to the standard activities in order to engage his desire to make connections and dig deeper into the issues.  The teacher candidate will differentiate by process for this student by allowing him to work at his own pace, individually more frequently.  During these times, it is important that the teacher candidate check in with him so that he has meaningful teacher to student connections without dominating whole group interactions.

**Section 2: Learning Goals and Objectives**

 The teacher candidate was asked by the cooperating teacher to teach the introductory unit of a larger section on *Romeo and Juliet.* It will take the class almost four weeks to cover the entire play, but the teacher candidate will introduce the work, the author, and the text of the first two acts of the play.

**Concept Map**

**Lesson 1 Standards and Objectives**

**Lesson 1 standards.** KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.9 – Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

**Lesson 1 objectives.**

1. SWBAT define comedy and tragedy in their notes (with 100% accuracy).

2. SWBAT compare the basic plot elements of *Pyramus and Thisbe* to *Romeo and Juliet* by identifying at least 4 similarities between the two stories on a graphic organizer.

3. SWBAT assess the claim that *Pyramus and Thisbe* is a source document for *Romeo and Juliet* and provide at least 1 reason with textual evidence that supports their assessment on the reading guide.

*Bloom’s Taxonomy Level.* Remembering, Understanding, Analyzing, Evaluating

**Lesson 2 Standards and Objectives**

 **Lesson 2 standards.** KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

 **Lesson 2 objectives.**

1. SWBAT identify key historical and biographical details about Shakespeare and his time period by completing a question guide with 85% accuracy.

2. SWBAT identify the relationships between the main characters with 70% mastery.

3. SWBAT analyze the major themes as they emerge in Act 1 by completing a reading guide with 80 % accuracy.

*Bloom’s Taxonomy Level.* Remembering, Understanding, and Analyzing

**Lesson 3 Standards and Objectives**

**Lesson 3 standards.** KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.5 – Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. KSDE Anchor Standard for Literacy, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 12: Read—both independently and collaboratively—print, non-print, and multi-modal works proficiently and critically to be media literate.

**Lesson 3 objectives.**

1. SWBAT identify and define the 3 key types of dramatic speeches in their notes and in the reading guide with at least 85% accuracy.

2. SWBAT discuss the theme “love at first sight” in small groups and in groups develop a reasonable argument that either supports or criticizes the realism of the plot.

*Bloom’s Taxonomy Level.* Remembering, Understanding, Analyzing, and Evaluating

**Lesson 4 Standards and Objectives**

**Lesson 4 standards.** KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

**Lesson 4 objectives.**

1. SWBAT define archetypes and dramatic irony in their notes with 100% accuracy.

2. SWBAT summarize and present, as a group, the key components of a scene with 80% accuracy.

3. SWBAT analyze main themes of the play in a small group discussion and in an exit slip with 80% mastery.

*Bloom’s Taxonomy Level.* Remembering, Understanding, and Analyzing

**Lesson 5 Standards and Objectives**

**Lesson 5 standards.** KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. KSDE CCRS RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

**Lesson 5 objectives.**

1. SWBAT criticize or defend Romeo and Juliet’s decision to marry with at least 1 good reason in a group activity.

2. SWBAT create a poster (according to the given rubric) that documents how a given character has developed with at least 80% mastery.

*Bloom’s Taxonomy Level.* Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating

**Rationale**

The teacher candidate has sought to engage students at various levels of Bloom’s taxonomy through various tasks and skills. Because the much of the unit material is brand new to students, it is necessary to provide students with the foundations of remember and comprehension when it comes to terms, background, characters, and language of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet.* Summarizing is one technique that the teacher candidate believes will increase student understanding. While laying an adequate foundation is important, the teacher candidate has planned opportunities for students to engage in analysis and evaluation from early on in the unit. By implementing opportunities for students to make personal connections with the text, form opinions, and criticize the characters’ choices, the teacher candidate hopes to move the students beyond just understanding to higher levels of thinking.

**Section 3: Assessment Plan**

**Table.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Objectives | Assessment | Modifications/ Accommodations |
| ***Lesson 1:***1. SWBAT define comedy and tragedy in their notes (with 100% accuracy). 2. SWBAT compare the basic plot elements of *Pyramus and Thisbe* to *Romeo and Juliet* by identifying at least 4 similarities between the two stories on a graphic organizer. 3. SWBAT assess the claim that *Pyramus and Thisbe* is a source document for *Romeo and Juliet* and provide at least 1 reason with textual evidence that supports their assessment on the reading guide. | Pre-test: 16 question quiz (15 matching and one fill in the blank) (formal formative).1. The teacher candidate will check student notes for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will collect and review compare and contrast graphic organizers (informal formative).3. The teacher candidate will collect and review student answers to this question on the open book quiz (formal formative). | The teacher candidate will allow students to complete the graphic organizer in groups of 2-3. This decision will benefit Student 3 by allowing her to better integrate with her peers and share in a smaller group and build confidence. Student 1 may work alone if he prefers, or with a group of more outspoken, confident students.  |
| ***Lesson 2:*** 1. SWBAT identify key historical and biographical details about Shakespeare and his time period by completing a question guide with 85% accuracy. 2. SWBAT identify the relationships between the main characters with 70% mastery. 3. SWBAT analyze the major themes as they emerge in Act 1 by completing a reading journal/guide with 80% accuracy. | 1. The teacher candidate will collect completed viewing guide question sheets for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will use informal observation and questioning to check comprehension (informal formative).3. The teacher candidate will collect and review reading guides for completeness, depth, and accuracy (formal formative). | The reading journal is open-ended allowing Student 1 to go deeper into the material. The teacher candidate will be conscious to give personal feedback (written/verbal) to both Student 1 and Student 3. |
| ***Lesson 3:*** 1. SWBAT identify and define the 3 key types of dramatic speeches in their notes and in the reading guide with at least 85% accuracy. 2. SWBAT discuss the theme “love at first sight” in small groups and in groups develop a reasonable argument that either supports or criticizes the realism of the plot. | 1. The teacher candidate will check student notes for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will observe group discussions and use probing questions to help students develop a more complete argument (i.e., Why do you think that? What evidence supports your opinion?) (informal formative). | The assessment for this lesson includes both written responses and verbal responses which will provide Student 1 and Student 3 with comfortable ways to express their learning. |
| ***Lesson 4:***1. SWBAT define archetypes and dramatic irony in their notes with 100% accuracy.2. SWBAT summarize and present, as a group, the key components of a scene with 80% accuracy. 3. SWBAT analyze main themes of the play in a small group discussion and in an exit slip with 80% mastery. | 1. The teacher candidate will check student notes for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will observe group discussions and presentations, and collet a summary worksheet from each group (informal formative).3. The teacher candidate will collect and review written responses on the exit slip (informal formative). | Student 3 will be in a group with Student 4 and Student 15. These students are quiet and hardworking and will help Student 3 feel more comfortable.  |
| ***Lesson 5:*** 1. SWBAT criticize or defend Romeo and Juliet’s decision to marry with at least 1 good reason in a group activity. 2. SWBAT create a poster (according to the given rubric) that documents how a given character has developed with at least 80% mastery. | 1. The teacher candidate will observe class discussion and ask probing questions as needed (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will view and critique each poster according to the guidelines laid out in the rubric (informal summative).Post-test: 16 question quiz (15 matching and one fill in the blank) (formal summative). | The group activity will allow Student 3 to interact socially with other students in a nonthreatening way.Student 1 will work alone on his poster project. The teacher candidate will encourage him to explore the content more deeply. |

**Rationale**

**Pre and post-tests.** The pre-test and post-test are identical, 16-question quizzes. There are 15 matching questions grouped into three groups of five questions each. The questions in each group pertained to specific topics – literary terms, background to the play, and characters and plot. Each group of five questions has seven possible responses to minimize guessing. The final question on the quiz is a fill-in-the-blank question. The pre-test is a formal formative assessment, but in the context of the post-test, it is a formal summative assessment.

**Informal formative assessments.** Because the content of this unit is so new to students, the majority of assessments are informal formative assessments. The teacher candidate will check notes, reading responses, and monitor discussions continually throughout the unit. It may be necessary to adjust the pace of the reading or the level of independence based on student comprehension. The teacher candidate plans to use verbal and written means throughout the unit to check student progress. These assessments will be vital for decision making during the unit, but most of these will not receive formal grades.

**Formal formative assessments.** The formal assessments in this unit consist of reading guides and journal worksheets. These items will be collected, graded, and returned. These assessments are designed to assess text comprehension, but also the students’ ability to analyze and evaluate the text. The journal format was chosen in an effort to differentiate based on student interest. Each student has the opportunity to focus on specific lines that are interesting to them.

**Informal summative assessment.** The poster project at the end of the unit is an informal summative assessment. Students will need to draw on all that they learn in order to produce the character analysis poster. The visual medium also allows students multiple means through which to express their learning. This will appeal to student interest because of the visual nature and the technological component.

**Section 4: Design for Instruction**

**Table**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objectives | Assessment | Lesson Overview/ Methodology | Adaptations |
| ***Lesson 1:***1. SWBAT define comedy and tragedy in their notes (with 100% accuracy). 2. SWBAT compare the basic plot elements of *Pyramus and Thisbe* to *Romeo and Juliet* by identifying at least 4 similarities between the two stories on a graphic organizer. 3. SWBAT assess the claim that *Pyramus and Thisbe* is a source document for *Romeo and Juliet* and provide at least 1 reason with textual evidence that supports their assessment on the reading guide. | Pre-test: 16 question quiz (15 matching and one fill in the blank) (formal formative).1. The teacher candidate will check student notes for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will collect and review compare and contrast graphic organizers (informal formative).3. The teacher candidate will collect and review student answers to this question on the open book quiz (formal formative). | Students will take the pretest.Students will take notes on their macs over the features of tragedy and comedy.The teacher candidate will read the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* aloud and discuss. The class will watch the overview video and complete the first column on the graphic organizer.The students will read *Pyramus and Thisbe* and complete the second column in the graphic organizer in groups of 2-3 or as individuals. Students will complete the open book quiz as homework. | Taking notes on the computers will increase student interest, especially students 1 and 3. Also, breaking the note taking up into smaller segments each day will help keep students’ attention.The video summary will engage visual learners and help students better understand the basic plot when we read. Student 3 will need this pre-reading support.The graphic organizer will scaffold the comparison of these two texts for students. Student 3 will benefit from this added support.Student 1 and 3 can choose to work with others or individually. |
| ***Lesson 2:*** 1. SWBAT identify key historical and biographical details about Shakespeare and his time period by completing a question guide with 85% accuracy. 2. SWBAT identify the relationships between the main characters with 70% mastery. 3. SWBAT analyze the major themes as they emerge in Act 1 by completing a reading guide with 80% accuracy. | 1. The teacher candidate will collect completed viewing guide question sheets for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will use informal observation and questioning to check comprehension (informal formative).3. The teacher candidate will collect and review reading guides for completeness, depth, and accuracy (formal formative). | Students will watch the video over Shakespeare’s life and times. They will take notes on their laptops using the viewing guide.The teacher candidate will distribute character guides and highlight the important people in the play. Students will volunteer to read parts from Act 1, scenes 1-3. The reading will include frequent pauses to discuss and clarify what is happening in the text. | Again, a video is used to engage the visual learners in the class. The video is fast passed and features experts and references scholarly work which will be of special interest to Student 1.Student 1 will be able to read a large part; while Student 3 does not have to read unless she volunteers. |
| ***Lesson 3:*** 1. SWBAT identify and define the 3 key types of dramatic speeches in their notes and in the reading guide with at least 85% accuracy. 2. SWBAT discuss the theme “love at first sight” in small groups and in groups develop a reasonable argument that either supports or criticizes the realism of the plot. | 1. The teacher candidate will check student notes for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will observe group discussions and use probing questions to help students develop a more complete argument (i.e., Why do you think that? What evidence supports your opinion?) (informal formative). | Students will take notes on their laptops over elements of drama.The teacher candidate will preview the website “No Fear Shakespeare.” Students will read on-line as individuals Act 1, scenes 4-5.The class will watch a movie clip of Act 1, scene 5.Students will then read aloud as a whole class Act 2, scenes 1-2. | Students’ understanding will be increased by citing examples and helping students foster personal connections to the text. This is especially important for students like Student 3 who struggle to perform.The movie version helps visual learners connect with the text.  |
| ***Lesson 4:***1. SWBAT define archetypes and dramatic irony in their notes with 100% accuracy.2. SWBAT summarize and present, as a group, the key components of a scene with 80% accuracy. 3. SWBAT analyze main themes of the play in a small group discussion and in an exit slip with 80% mastery. | 1. The teacher candidate will check student notes for completeness and accuracy (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will observe group discussions and presentations, and collet a summary worksheet from each group (informal formative).3. The teacher candidate will collect and review written responses on the exit slip (informal formative). | Students will take notes over Archetypes and Dramatic Irony.Students will watch the movie version of Act 2, scenes 1-2. Students will jigsaw read Act 2, scenes 3-6. There will be 5 groups. Each group will be responsible to summarize the section that they read and present the key information to the group. | The jigsaw reading in the group setting will provide social support for all students, especially for Student 3. Student 1will be able to serve as a leader in his group.  |
| ***Lesson 5:*** 1. SWBAT criticize or defend Romeo and Juliet’s decision to marry with at least 1 good reason in a group activity. 2. SWBAT create a poster (according to the given rubric) that documents how a given character has developed with at least 80% mastery. | 1. The teacher candidate will observe class discussion and ask probing questions as needed (informal formative).2. The teacher candidate will view and critique each poster according to the guidelines laid out in the rubric (informal summative).Post-test: 16 question quiz (15 matching and one fill in the blank) (formal summative). | Students will take notes on static and dynamic characters. Students will participate in a four corners discussion evaluating the plot, characters, and literary worth of *Romeo and Juliet.* Students will have opportunity to make personal connections.Students will work in pairs to create a poster that analyzes either Romeo or Juliet’s personal growth to this point in the play. | This lesson requires students to get up and move around and discuss. This will provide support for kinesthetic learners, and help all students increase oxygen to the brain.Creating a poster requires students to think creatively and visually. Student 3 needs opportunities to express herself non-verbally. Student 1 will work alone on this project to better  |

**Rationale**

 **Lesson 1.** In lesson one, the teacher candidate decided to use a graphic organizer and a video overview to engage visual learners. The video is an animated preview of every important plot event in the story. Because the language of Shakespeare is difficult for students, providing a road map of the story before reading is even more important. The teacher candidate believes that the video and the organizer will help students not only in this lesson, but throughout the course of the unit and beyond. The teacher candidate chose to introduce *Romeo and Juliet* and *Pyramus and Thisbe* simultaneously because by analyzing the short work, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the students are able to practice and review all the skills of literary analysis that they will need to successfully complete analysis of *Romeo and Juliet.*

 **Lesson 2.** In lesson two, a video was also used to provide information about Shakespeare’s life and times. The video featured experts and a very scholarly perspective that appeal to higher level students, but also it also has pictures and interesting facts that have broader appeal to all students. Since all the students have school issued computers, the teacher candidate decided to have students take notes on their laptops. The students enjoy using their computers so student engagement is naturally higher when technology is included in the lesson process. Another benefit for choosing to take notes on the computer is that students cannot lose their papers. It will help students maintain continuity throughout the unit. Lesson two involves whole class reading because in first encountering Shakespeare the students will need more direction from the teacher candidate and support to understand the text.

 **Lesson 3.** Lesson two involve group and independent reading. The teacher candidate decided to show the students an online resource, No Fear Shakespeare, which provides the original text of the play in parallel to modern English translation. With the support of this tool, the students will begin to engage the content more independently. The teacher candidate also plans to show clips from a movie version of *Romeo and Juliet* in order to give students a second exposure to the language, characters, and plot. The video will also help students visualize the story and increase engagement.

 **Lesson 4.** In lesson four, the teacher candidate will implement video clips and group discussion again. This lesson introduces a jigsaw reading of several scenes in Act 2. The jigsaw strategy allows students to analyze one scene in greater detail with their group. Each group will summarize and present what happens in their section to the whole class. The flexible groupings in this class period will help maintain engagement and provide students with the opportunity to share with others whose opinions may differ. Jigsaw will also allow the whole class access to the content of five scenes, but each student will only need to read a small part of that. This will help maintain progress and save time as students work through the text.

 **Lesson 5.** In this lesson, a four corners activity will be implemented to help foster discussion. This strategy will be used because students are more likely to engage in discussion if their brains are well oxygenated and they are making personal connections to the text. The teacher candidate will ask a series of questions which will help students evaluate what they have read up to this point. Depending on student’s individual opinions, they will move to different places in the room. Students will have opportunity to discuss within the group of like-mind peers before sharing with the whole class. The novelty of this strategy will make this discussion more engaging for kinesthetic and social learners. Following this discussion, the students will work with a partner to create a visual representation of the development of one of the two main characters. This activity requires creativity, visualization, and critical analysis. Students will create posters on their computers. This is an opportunity for students to recode and reinforce information from the reading and class discussions.

**Section 5: Instructional Decision Making**

**Lesson 1**

 In this lesson, the teacher candidate had to improvise when it came to making analogies. The teacher candidate referenced an activity from the previous week where the Students Against Distract Driving organization simulated the how often teenagers are harmed by texting and driving. By connecting the classical idea of tragedy as a tool to teach and warn with a recent example, the students were able to better comprehend the concept. Linking new concepts to previous learning and background knowledge is very important to the teacher candidate’s philosophy of education and was a valuable addition to this lesson. All the objectives were met.

**Lesson 2**

 During the video in this lesson, the teacher candidate observed that students seemed stressed and felt overwhelmed. The video was very fast paced and information dense. Very quickly, the teacher candidate decided to pause the video frequently in order to reiterate and discuss key ideas. This modification helped ease student fear that they were missing critical information and allowed for the teacher candidate to place the appropriate emphasis on the most critical facts about Shakespeare’s life. This improvisation helped students meet the objectives and increased learning.

**Lesson 3**

 By the end of the previous, it became evident to the teacher candidate that the students would not be able to cover all the planned material and still be able to absorb the meaning. Therefore, in Lesson 3, the teacher candidate decided to slow down and continue reading and discussing as a whole class rather than ask students to read independently. While less material was covered, student comprehension and analysis benefited from the extra, ongoing support. While the content covered shifted from this point in the unit onward, the underlying skills were all still taught and assessed. So the objectives for this lesson were still met.

**Lesson 4**

 At one point in Lesson 4, the students all seemed to be very fatigued. The teacher candidate observed that interest and engagement were at a low point. The teacher candidate instructed students to stand up, stretch, and give three other students a high five before continuing. This “brain break” greatly improved the quality of discussion and engagement for the rest of the class period. Students needed a chance to get up, move around, and increase oxygen flow to the brain. The break helped students refocus and reenergize. After seeing the positive results of this unplanned event, the teacher candidate intends to implement this kind of brain break more often in the future. Objective 2 was modified from a small group activity to a whole class activity in order to provide the support needed by students. This modified objective was met, but the objective as it was originally stated was not met.

**Lesson 5**

 The teacher candidate came to class intending to have students finish Act 2 in group reading. However, when reviewing the homework at the beginning of class it became apparent that students had not fully grasped the language and imagery of Act 2, scene 2. Therefore, the teacher candidate decided to have students reread and further analyze this important scene during this class period. Students did not meet the specific objective of deeply analyzing a character through the creation of a poster, but they did employ language and character analysis to more deeply understand the thoughts and motives of the characters as expressed in the scene. So, with variation in the specific product, the primary skill of the objective was met.

**Section 6: Analysis of Student Learning**

**Table 1**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student ID | Pre-Test (%) | Post-Test (%) | Gain/Loss(%) |
| Student 1 | 37.5 | 100.0 | +62.5 |
| Student 2 | 37.5 | 100.0 | +62.5 |
| Student 3 | 37.5 | 100.0 | +62.5 |
| Student 4 | 43.75 | 100.0 | +56.25 |
| Student 5 | 43.75 | 81.25 | +37.5 |
| Student 6 | 18.75 | 50.0 | +31.25 |
| Student 7 | 37.5 | 93.75 | +56.25 |
| Student 8 | 37.5 | 81.25 | +43.75 |
| Student 9 | 43.75 | 100.0 | +56.25 |
| Student 10 | 18.75 | 87.5 | +68.75 |
| Student 11 | 56.25 | 81.25 | +25.0 |
| Student 12 | 50.0 | 93.75 | +43.75 |
| Student 13 | 12.5 | 75.0 | +62.5 |
| Student 14 | 6.25 | 50.0 | +43.75 |
| Student 15 | 50.0 | 100.0 | +50.0 |
| Student 16 | 31.25 | 75.0 | +43.75 |

**Analysis**

All of the students made significant gains between the pre- and post- test. Student 11 gained the least (+25%), but that student also had the highest pre-test score so they started out with less potential for gain. Student 6 told the teacher candidate after the post test that he was having a very bad headache that day and did not feel that he had performed well on his quiz. This could explain why his score was post test score was below the class average. Student 14 expressed verbally in conversation with the teacher candidate that she had learned and enjoyed the content in this unit. She reported that she has high test anxiety, and the classroom teacher confirmed that her performance on most objective assessments is lower than what would be expected given her enthusiasm and engagement in the class. Overall, the teacher candidate felt that the students made adequate gains over the course of the unit. No one answered the fill in the blank question correctly on the pre-test, but all 16 students answered that question correctly on the post assessment.

**Table 2**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student ID | Compare and Contrast (+/-) | Open Book Quiz (15) | Shakespeare Notes () | Literary Notes () | Personal Response (+/-) | Journal (10) |
| Student 1  | **+** | 13 |  |  | **+** | 8 |
| Student 2  | **+** | 15 |  |  | **+** | 10 |
| Student 3  | **-** | 10 |  |  | **+** | 4 |
| Student 4  | **+** | 15 |  |  | **+** | 10+ |
| Student 5  | **+** | 13 |  |  | **+** | 8 |
| Student 6  | **-** | 10 |  |  | **+** | 8 |
| Student 7  | **+** | 12 |  |  | **+** | 0 (NHI)\* |
| Student 8  | **-** | 8 |  |  | **+** | 0 (NHI)\* |
| Student 9  | **+** | 14 |  |  | **+** | 0 (NHI)\* |
| Student 10  | **+** | 10 |  | **-** | **+** | 0 (NHI)\* |
| Student 11  | **+** | 15 |  |  | **+** | 8 |
| Student 12  | **+** | 14 |  |  | **+** | 10 |
| Student 13  | **-** | 8 |  |  | **+** | 10 |
| Student 14  | **+** | 10 |  |  | **+** | 5 |
| Student 15  | **+** | 15 |  |  | **+** | 10 |
| Student 16  | **-** | 13 |  |  | **+** | 7 |

\* NHI – not handed in

**Analysis**

 The overall data from these assignments supports the pre-/post- test data that all students in the class made gains. The teacher candidate feels that the results from the journal assignment and the compare and contrast assignment reflect a lack of clarity in instructions. In the week following this unit, the students repeated the journal assignment (on a different section of the play) after more explicit instruction. Performance increased dramatically across the board. The teacher candidate believes that those students who did not turn in the journal assignment did so because they did not understand the instructions clearly. That being said, the supervising teacher said that those same students often do not turn in assignments that are done outside of class time. Nonetheless, the teacher candidate feels that the journal assignment did not assess the intended material because of confusion surrounding the expectations and instructions.

 The personal response paragraphs most clearly demonstrate the students’ growth in understanding, analyzing, and evaluating the content material surrounding *Romeo and Juliet.* The teacher candidate was very pleased with the depth and thoughtfulness of the student’s responses. Each student had made marked progress from the assignments on the first day or two of the unit.

**Section 7: Reflection and Self-Evaluation**

**Relationships**

Building trust and personal relationships with students is one of the most important aspects of teaching. Students learn more when they feel safe, connected, and heard. In the short time that I was in this classroom, I made a very intentional effort to learning something specific about each student. I felt that it was important to arrive early for class and chat with students in the hallway and to take an interest in their lives outside of the classroom. I conducted a student interest survey in the second week of my time with the class. The survey gave me insight into their interests, home life, learning preferences, and general attitudes toward school. This information, along with meaningful face to face interaction, allowed me to be a more effective teacher. For both of my identified students, Student 1 and Student 3, the relational aspect of the classroom was very important to their academic success. I feel that building relationships with my students is one of the strengths that I bring to my teaching. I intend to continue to nurture this natural care for the students as I grow in my professionalism and experiences because I believe that relationship is at the heart of teaching and learning.

**Time**

I believe that the struggle to cover everything in such a short time is a constant tension for teachers in the field. One thing that was constantly in my mind while I was planning and teaching was that time is the enemy. When planning, I struggled over every lesson to decide what to include and what to leave out. While teaching, I always felt like the hour ran by way faster than a normal hour. I was aware more than ever before that every activity has to count, and that there is almost no room for tangents and delay. I felt pressure to make every activity a “high impact” learning experience. Because of the material that needed to be covered, I need the lesson to be knowledge/skill dense. Yet I also needed the activities to be fun, engaging, and sensitive to students needs for review. Planning can help streamline lessons and maximize the time, but flexibility is always essential.

More creative activities, like posters/movie creation, PBL, and performance based assessments, require more time. Therefore, they should be used in the situations where they can make the most impact. I intend to implement these kinds of learning strategies as often as possible, but after this unit, I feel I have a more realistic idea of how often those kinds of activities will actually fit into a semester. I believe that if my teaching had extended to two or three weeks I would have been able to implement a performance based assessment and more creative means for students to demonstrate their learning. This practicum experience has made me look forward even more to having my own classroom and developing curriculum for the whole year.

In teaching this unit, I had to learn to deal with what happens when time runs out or students need to slow down for better comprehension. I like being organized and sticking to the plans that I make, yet my foundational belief is that teaching is for the students and their needs always come first. In this unit, I had to adjust constantly to meet the students’ needs. Sometimes this meant that my carefully crafted plans needed to be drastically reworked on short notice. Ultimately, my flexibility and readiness to adapt to my students increased learning. This experience has cemented in my mind the paradoxical necessity for thorough planning and flexibility in order to use the limited time to create an environment for successful learning.

**Teaching Techniques**

This teaching experience reinforced for me several ideas about specific techniques that can enhance the quality of learning in the classroom. First, I was reminded how important it is to give students multiple exposures to content material, especially when students have less background on the subject. For this unit, most of the students had no prior experience with reading Shakespeare. They needed to cover the material at a slower pace, with frequent review. My portion of the unit was the introductory sections of the play. For the remainder of the study on *Romeo and Juliet*, the students were able to progress more quickly and more independently because they had built up the foundational knowledge and skills that they needed to proceed with confidence.

One of my weaknesses in this unit was clarity in giving instructions for the homework assignments. Sometimes students were unclear about what they should do, or what would be collected and what was for their notes. I think I felt rushed when I was giving the instructions, but it would have save time in the long run if I had slowed down, been more clear, and given examples. When I collected the first journals, only two of the students had completed the assignment in the way that I had expected. This was an indication that the rest of the class had not understood the instructions. Therefore, I tried to clarify the instructions and the second round of journals (the journal scores recorded in table 2 of the previous section). The results for this assignment were much better, but a number of students still did not meet expectations and several did not turn in the assignment. I attribute this to continuing confusion/frustration regarding the instructions more than to lack of content understanding. This is an area that I plan to improve on in the future.

One of the best moments of the class was when I made an impromptu decision to take a brain break. I asked the students to stand up, walk around, and high five three of their classmates. Then we got back to the reading and discussion. There was a tangible difference in the attitudes and engagement of the students after that brief period of movement and rest. It was almost as if I could see the oxygen flooding the students’ brains when we resumed the content. I will keep the ideas of movement and brain breaks in mind more in the future as I plan and teach. It made a huge difference!

Another strategy that I want to implement more of in my future teaching is Total Participation Techniques (TPT) which encourages all students to be active learners in the whole course of the lesson. I planned for more TPT than I was actually able to implement in my teaching. TPT was not an established part of the classroom routine so it was not as easy to implement as I had hoped. Yet, I believe that it is important for each student to have the opportunity to think, share, and provide input into the class conversation. This is an area where I can continue to grow.

**Conclusion**

Overall, I feel that this unit was a positive step in my professional development. I gained a lot of confidence and experience by teaching the consecutive class periods. I feel that as I near the end of my program of study I am more prepared than ever before to enter the classroom as a teacher. My goals in future teaching experiences are to continue to put students first as I make curriculum and instructional decisions in the classroom, to broaden the strategies that I use in order to meet the needs of diverse learners, to collect and analyze student data in a meaningful way the enhances learning, and to advance the teaching profession through thoughtful reflection and ongoing professional and personal growth. I am so proud to call myself a teacher!

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